THE

Black Book OF CONSCIENCE

OR,

God's High Court of Justice in the Soul.

Wherein the truth and sincerity, the Dece and Hypocrisie of every mans Heart and Ways, is judged and discovered by their Consciences.

Very seasonable for these Times, where wicked men, under pretence of Liberty Conscience, take liberty to sin and Bla pheme.

37th *Edition.* By Andrew Jones.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and d perately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord sea the heart, I try the reins, even to give every m according to his ways, and according to the f of his doings, Jer. 17. 9.

Unto the pure all things are pure, but to the that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure but even their Mind and Conscience, Tit. 8. 1

Take heed to your selves what Conscience you have, For Conscience will damn, and Conscience will save.

London, Printed for *W. Thackray*, *T. Pa P. Brooksby*, and *J. Clarke*. 16[illegible]

BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA·OXONIENSIS

THE *BLACK BOOK* OF CONSCIENCE.

Revel. 20. 12.

And I saw the Dead small and great stand before God: and the Books were opened; and another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the Dead were judged of those things which were written in the Book, according to their works.

AS there are several Books of [illegible] which he hath written for [illegible] of all the Children of men: [illegible] are two special Books, by which the Lord will proceed in Judgement against all the Sons and Daughters of Men. The Books which God hath given to the Children of Men, for the use and comfort of Salvation, are these: first, and chiefly, the Books of the Old and New Testament, where Jesus Christ, [illegible]

his Offices, King, Priest, and Prophet, to to rule and guide us by his Spirit in our hearts is made known and declared unto us. And then in likewise is set down how every one of us ought to live, and demean himself in this present world: with several fearful Examples of Gods heavy Judgements against wicked and notorious sinners, in Drowning the old World for their sins and wickedness, as you may see in the sixth of Genesis. So likewise in destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, by fire from heaven, *Gen.* 16. 24, 25. And the Lord rained upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, Fire and Brimstone, and overthrew those Cities, and all their inhabitants. With sundry other fearful examples of Gods heavy wrath and indignation, both against Sin and sinners, in general and particular: All which as St. Jude saith in his Epistle, are set forth for our examples, suffering the Vengeance of the eternal fire. Not for our examples, that we should do as they did, to commit such sins, lest the Lord lay upon us such, or more heavier weights of wrath and Vengeance.

So likewise in the Book of the Scripture, is set forth the blessed and happy estate and condition of all the Godly, both in this life, and the life to come, as you may see, Psal. 1. and Psalm 15. and Psal. 92. The Godly man shall be delivered from the Snare of the Fowler, and from

from the noiſome Peſtilence. And becauſe he hath made the Lord his refuge, there ſhall no evil befall him: So he ſhall give his Angels charge over him, for to keep him in all his ways, ver. 20, 21. The joys that are prepared for the Godly, and the eternal torments that are appointed for the wicked, are here likewiſe ſet forth in the Book of the Scripture, as you ſee, Mat. 15. 34. 41. To the Godly, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, (ſaith Chriſt) inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the beginning of the World. But to the Ungodly, Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

Another great Book of God, is the Book of the Creatures containing their mighty Works, both of the Creation and Providence, wherein the Almightineſs, Power, and Goodneſs of God are ſo plainly written, that he that runs may read and ſee it: For as the Apoſtle ſaith, Rom, 1. 20. The inviſible things of him from the creating of the world are clearly ſeen: Being underſtood (ſaith the Apoſtle) by things that are made, even his eternal power and God-head, ſo that they are without excuſe. Who but an Almighty God could out of nothing create all things? As David ſaith, It is nothing but the Almighty Power and Wonderful Providence of God that bears up the

earth, and upholds the foundation thereof. And this Book, even the very Heathens, who know not God in his Word, who never heard of Jesus Christ or Salvation, are acquainted with: they (I say) by seeing and reading the mighty works of God in the world, do confess and say, Verily there is a God, and none but a God could create these glorious creatures, the Sun, Moon and Stars.

So likewise there are two special Books, by which God will judge all the Sons and Daughters of men at the last. And there are first, the Book of his Remembrance, written by himself; wherein the lives of all men, yea, their very thoughts are recorded, as David saith, Psal. 49. 11. The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men, that they are vanity. And Psal. 139. 1, 2, 3, 4. saith David, O Lord thou hast searched me, & known me; thou knowest my down sitting & my up-rising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. There is not a word in my mouth, but thou O Lord, knowest it altogether. And although the heart of man, as Jeremiah saith, Jer. 27. 9, 10. is deceitful above all things, yet God doth exactly know every turning and corner thereof: I the Lord know the heart (saith he) I try the reins. There is nothing can be hid from his eternal all-seeing eye. And

And then secondly, There is the Book of Conscience, in which is exactly written all our actions, thoughts, words, and deeds; and according to this Book of Conscience, and what is therein written, will the Lord proceed in judgement; and every mans conscience shall be his own Judge. Saith God, What hast thou done? How hast thou lived in the world? Why, thus and thus have I lived, saith Conscience. Conscience will then speak the truth, and nothing but the truth. O Lord (saith a Wicked mans conscience) I have dishonoured thy Name, I have abused thy grace and mercy, in turning it into wantonness. I have abused thy creatures, by wasteful and riotous spending, to please and satisfie my Lust, saith the Prodigal mans conscience; and by chambering and wantonness, by Gaming and Dicing away my precious time, saith the Lascivious and Voluptuous mans conscience. Thou gavest me time and seasons of grace and mercy, and many precious opportunities, and soul advantages, whereby I might have wrought out my own Salvation with fear and trembling: and as St. *Peter* saith, I might have made my calling and election sure to my own soul; but instead of working out my own Salvation with fear and trembling, & in making my calling and election sure, I have wrought out my own damnation, without either fear

wait; and made my self sure of eternal and everlasting wrath and condemnation, saith the meer moral, formal, and prophane Christians Consciences. Ah Lord (saith the dissembling hypocrites Conscience) I have been but an outside Christian, I have gone to Church but onely as Dogs do, for fashions sake, and to be looked upon, and esteemed among my neighbours; I have made a shew indeed and pretence of Religion and Holiness: but it hath been a meer shew: I have altogether denied the power and practice of it in my life and conversation, as it is, Tit. 1. 16. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him; being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate. And why so, because he saith in the 15 verse, Their minds and consciences are defiled. Ah, my conscience told me several times, that I was but an hypocrite, a meer painted Sepulchre, fair without, but foul within: O but, I would not hear Conscience then, but slighted and neglected him; Ah, but now my Conscience makes me hear him whether I will or no; Therefore Lord do with me what thou pleasest; true and righteous art thou in thy dealings towards me, be they never so harsh, they are but the just reward of my iniquities. And saith the Covetous mans conscience, and the griping, cruel, extorting Usurers Conscience, Lord, I confess

confess I have been a covetous wretch, but I have not coveted after heaven; it hath been my whole trade and business to cozen and cheat others, and to gripe and grind the faces of the poor, and all that I could do unto others: But alas for me, what have I done? I have quite and clean undone my own soul, and that to all eternity: I have been very cruel and unmerciful to others; I would not forgive my poor brethren in the least. O Lord I deserve no mercy at thy hands, the hottest place in hell will be too cool for me.

What have you done with all your Wealth, (saith God to rich men) all those great Estates and Possessions which I lent to you, or rather intrusted you with as Stewards? How have you improved them? what of them have you laid out or lent to me again in relieving my poor members? What good have you gotten to your own souls by them? have you laid up any thing in store for eternal life? O no, saith conscience, I have not Lord! I have not. But this I have done, I have treasured up wrath against the day of wrath. My gold & my silver is rusted, my riches are corrupted, & my garments moth-eaten, as St. Iames saith in his 5 ch. 12, 13, 14. verses. my gold & my silver is cankered, & the rust of them is now a witness against me to condemn me, & eats my flesh as it were fire. And now also behold the hire of the labourers which have reap-

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ed down my field, which I kept back by fraud cryeth, and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the Ears of the Lord of Sabbaths: I have lived in pleasure on the Earth, and been wanton, and I have nourished my heart as in a day of slaughter. I told you (saith Conscience) that for all your pleasures, and for all your riches, and for all your greatness and delight, you must come to Judgement, and give an account to God for all your actions, and for all your wealth: and how and which way you spent every penny that he lent you: did not I tell you, saith Conscience? True it is, my Conscience told me, but I slighted conscience as a thing of no value or account. Ah miserable man that I was, to slight this good voice of Conscience! Wo unto me, my punishment is less than mine iniquities deserveth. Thus, and thus, will mens consciences deal with them before the Lord.

When *Peter* had denied his Lord and Master, his Conscience let him alone once, yea, a twice, but the third time the Cock crew, and *Peter*'s heart smote him for what he had done; and he went forth and wept bitterly. *Peter* did not go about to stop the mouth of his conscience, as Judas did and so hanged himself: no, *Peter* closed with the voice of his conscience, and so by his true and unfeigned repentance obtained mercy.

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So likewise David, when the Prophet Nathan (in 2 Sam. 1. 13.) had by the parable of the Ewe-Lamb, shewed David the evil of his sins, presently David was convinced in his conscience of the horidness of his great sins: And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. Have mercy upon me (saith David, *Psa.* 51. the *Psalm* of repentance according to thy loving kindness: According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgression. Wash me thorowly from mine iniquity, & cleanse me from my sin: For I acknowledge my transgression, & my sin is ever before me. Against thee, even thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight. David had a very tender conscience, for when he did but cut off Sauls skirt, his heart smote him, his conscience accused him; as you may see, 1 Sam. 24. 5. O but how many wicked men are there now whose conscience tells them over and over again and again of their sins, and yet for all that they stop their ears against Conscience. How many times doth the beastly drunkards conscience, the prophane Swearers, and the Sabbath-breakers conscience, tells them of their sins, and yet notwithstanding, for all the checks of conscience, they will go on in their sins, and fill up the measures of their iniquities: and so make Conscience to fill up his black Scroll of Indictments against them, where-

whereby they are everlastingly condemned: O if men would but be convinc'd in their consciences of the evil of their ways, when their conscience tells them of it; how many thousands might be brought home by Repentance to life eternal, who now run head-long to the pit of destruction? I am perswaded that many who cozen and cheat by undermining and overselling, by using false and light weights and measures, cannot chuse but meet with many checks from their consciences: and O that men would be convinced of this evil.

Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy by false weights and measures: O be convinced in thy conscience! Make Conscience thy friend now by forsaking thy evil practices, lest Conscience prove thy foe to torment thee for ever. But men now adays, instead of being convinced in their Consciences of the evil of their ways, are not ashamed to commit all manner of abominations, and that with greedinesse; and then lay all the blame upon their poor Consciences: And why so? It was my Conscience, say they, as many of our cursed diabolical Rankers, Quakers, and notorious wicked Libertines, in these our days, have laid all their impieties and horrid blasphemies upon their consciences. Ask them but the reason why they deny Christ and the Scripture, and cast off ordinances, and

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the Miniſtry of Chriſt, and live as they liſt, and refuſe ſubjection to Magiſtrates, and in their actions become worſe than beaſts? Why they do hold ſuch damnable and deviliſh opinions both againſt God and Chriſt, yea, againſt humanity it ſelf? Aſk them the reaſon of theſe things, and what do they ſay? It is from the Light within us; it is the Liberty of our Conſciences; and have we not fought for Liberty of Conſcience? Ah curſed Wretch, the Light within you is darkneſs! Is this the Liberty of Conſcience? No, no, this is the Liberty of of thy Luſts, and the deluſion of the Devil, thou haſt ſeared thy conſcience with a hot Iron; but yet at laſt, thy conſcience, though thou haſt defiled it never ſo much, will put the ſaddle upon the right horſe, and charge thee home with all the blame. Is Liberty of conſcience a Liberty to ſin? No, God forbid: Shall we ſin (ſaith St. Paul, Rom. 6. 1.) that grace may abound? No, God forbid. I dare not (ſaith a gracious heart) my conſcience tells me I muſt not. How ſhall I (ſaith Joſeph, Gen. 39. 9.) do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God? The Grace of God (ſaith the Apoſtle, Tit. 2. 11.) that brings ſalvation, teacheth men to deny Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world: And not to live as we liſt, which is a ſign of no grace at all.

A truly tender Conscience will be very te[illegible]er of committing sin, and will have a circum[illegible]ect care over himself, how he walks and ho[illegible] he[illegible]ves, that so the name of God and of Chri[illegible] be not Blasphemed: but in these last and wor[illegible] of times, wherein men, as St. *P*aul saith, make shipwrack of faith and a good conscience; men have not minded this at all, but have taken a full liberty to commit all manner of sins. And I pray God that this Sin be not charged upon those who instead of restraining men from Sin and punishing them for sin, have by their evil Examples encouraged them to sin. Let men take heed how they sin, because grace abounds. For saith the Apostle, Heb. 10. 26, 27. If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin: but a certain fearful looking for of judgement, and fiery indignation from the Lord. For the wrath of God (*Rom.* 1. 18.) is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness. Read these two texts, and tremble all ye that take liberty to sin, because the grace of God hath abounded. How will ye be able to look either God or Conscience in the face? certainly you will never be able to do it, unless you repent: for if men will sin willingly, notwithstanding all their checks of conscience,

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their Conscience will condemn them irresistably before the Lord. For certain it is, there is Conscience in every man, that sees, and observes, and takes notice of all their ways, and will keep a just account of them, and so be a witness either for or against the Soul at the day of Judgement. What was it that made the Apostles so joyful in their troubles and Persecutions? was it not the witness of their Consciences? see 2 Cor. 1. 12. Our rejoycing is this (saith St. Paul) the Testimony of our Conscience. What was it made Paul and Silas sing in Prison for joy? was it not that their Conscience told them they were happy and blessed men, notwithstanding all their sufferings and reproaches.

Now what Conscience is, I shall briefly shew you, and so conclude: Conscience is a thing with which God endued the Soul of man by Creation, and is for our comfort, if we live well as we ought to do: but will be a dreadful Terror to all those that live and dye in their sins. for this conscience was in Adam before his fall though not as a condemner till his fall: For where there is no sin, what needeth an accuser? so long as Adam kept the commands of God, there was no cause for Conscience to condemn him; but as soon as ever Adam transgrest, his Conscience flew in his face; which made him flie from the face of God, as you may see, Gen. 3. 7, 8.

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The eyes of them both were opened; their [illegible] sciences accused them and they hid themselves. And this conscience is only in men and women, for brute beasts wanting reason, are not capable of conscience: and the beasts when they die there is an end of them: but it is not so with men, for conscience in man followeth the man further than the Grave; for if men might bury their conscience with them in their Graves, they might be happy, notwithstanding all their abuse of conscience, for man oftentimes, against all reason, equity, or conscience, doth worse than the worst of beasts. And this conscience keepeth his Court in the heart, and there sits upon the life and death of the Soul, and according as he finds every ones work, so doth he pass Sentence of condemnation or absolution: for there is no bribing of conscience; conscience will speak the truth of every mans ways before the Lord, be they good or be they evil. If our heart condemn us, saith St. John, 1 Ioh. 2. 10. God is greater than our hearts, that is our conscience.

And God hath given this power to conscience, because men should have no plea of excuse before the Lord. It was not Pilate's washing of his hands, and saying, I am guiltless of the blood of this just man, that could wash away the guilt of Christs blood from his conscience, Pilate's conscience told him, that *Christ* was a just man,

man, and that he ſaw no cauſe of death in him at all, Luk. 23.23. and yet curſed Pilate, contrary to the light of his own conſcience, delivered the Lord of Life into the hands of bloody men to be Crucified, and ſo bought the guilt of his blood upon his own ſoul.

He that will not endure Conſcience to reprove him for his ſins, certainly he loves to go to Hell without controul: and he that will not endure Conſcience to tell him of his ſins here, ſhall whether he will or no, ſuffer ſufficient Torment for his ſins hereafter: For an evil Conſcience is a Hell to the Soul here, and ſhall be the Hell of Hells hereafter.

Now then if there be ſuch a thing in man as Conſcience, and that his Conſcience ſhall either juſtifie or condemn him, then let every man take heed how he orders his Converſation in the World: Do not give leave to your ſelves to think, ſay, or do any thing, but what you are willing to own before the Lord at the laſt Day; Therefore let every one of us ſo think, and ſo ſpeak, and ſo do, that we may not have a conſcience to condemn us: But let us live as thoſe that expect to have Conſcience witneſs for them before the Lord, that with Godly ſincerity they have had their Converſation in this world. But what multitudes are there in the world, that live as if there were no Conſcience at all; nei-

ther God nor Devil, no Heaven nor Hell whose God is their Belly, and whose end is destruction (as St. *Paul* saith, *Phil.* 3. 19.) who declare their sin as *Sodom*, and hide it not: Woe unto them (saith the Lord) they have rewarded evil to themselves, Isa. 3. 9. This may be said of thousands among us, whose countenance testifie against them, their wanton Carriages, painted faces, naked Breasts, powdered Locks, and other antick Fashions, testifie against thousands both of men and women, that they do little mind this great truth, that Conscience can, and will declare all their doings to God. Proud Hamans, drunken Nabals, and whoring Jezabels declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not; and as for Conscience they turn him off: but let these miserable wretches know this as the Apostle saith, Wo unto them who have rewarded evil unto themselves. They have made a long, black, blotted Bill for Conscience to pen against them at the last day of the term of their lives, as soon as ever their souls are departed from their bodies, sentence shall be passed against them, according to the light and testimony of their own Conscience.

Seeing then Conscience will give Testimony of every ones ways, let us not slip Conscience, let us not stop the mouth of Conscience, seeing Conscience can and will speak, and tell us what we are. Many there are that go about to

the mouth of Conscience, when Conscience deals plainly with them, and tells them of their sins. Oh they cannot endure to hear that: but remember the miserable end of Judas, what said Judas his Conscience to him? Thou hast betrayed thy Lord and Master for a little Silver.

Ah Covetous wretch! but could Judas his Silver stop the mouth of his Conscience? No, Judas his Conscience so terrifies him, that he flung in the Money again, and so went and hanged himself.

So likewise remember the fearful estate of Spira, and many others, whose consciences made them to possess the wrath of God here on Earth. A wounded Spirit (saith Solomon, Pro. 8. 14.) who can bear? A tormenting and condemning Conscience who can endure? O there is no resisting of Conscience, it is Gods Vice-gerent in the Soul. When Conscience speaks threatning Language to many for such and such sins, they seek to turn Conscience out of doors: but because they cannot possibly do this, they strive to stop his mouth by running wilfully into sin: like men that desperately give up their Souls to the Devil, and so make shipwrack of Faith, Conscience, Soul, and all for ever: and then Judas (as we have seen by woful experience) self-stabbing, self-hanging, drowning or poysoning, or some such like accursed ends. Oh consider this

of you be not one day found to weep over one others backs in Hell. Certainly whole Coaches of Gallants will be tumbled down into hell. The Lord awaken your sleepy dead consciences before you go hence and be no more seen. What pitty it is that persons that bear the Image of God, and are as it were in outward glory and beauty, Gods above others; what pitty is it that such beauty should come to be imbrac'd by ugly loathsome Devils in Hell? Thousands there are, that court and sport, pin and paint away their time, whose end is to be burned, and shall at last perish in Hell. Fruitless Fig-trees they are, that bear nothing but Leaves. Cut them down (saith God) and cast them into the Fire. To perish in a prison or on a dunghill is nothing, to die for want of food is nothing: Lazarus died so, whilst Dives with his delicious Fare died on his Bed of Down, and was cast into Hell. You that lye upon Beds of Ivory, and have your hangings of Needle-works, if you get not Christ and a good Conscience, Hell shall be your fare, and Devils your companions to Torment you for ever: And who shall be able to stand in the day of the Lords wrath? And, who can dwell with everlasting burnings?

Companions in Sin, shall be Companions in Hell; and those who can sport and play one with another, shall in Hell drag and torment one another,

another, and curse the day that ever they saw one another; and cry out one of another; O what miserable wretches were we, to lose the Heaven of Heavens, for a little vain delight, the love and favour of God, for the love and favour of wicked Companions, in whose presence we more delighted, than in the everlasting love of God; whose pleasures are pleasures for evermore. What profiteth now, that we have had our Wine and our Musick, our all and our full of delights? O wretched creatures that we are, who shall deliver us from this dying death, these miserable Torments? Wo unto us, we have rewarded evil to our own souls, we are banished for ever from the presence of the Lord, and have utterly lost that inward peace of Conscience, the want whereof addeth Torment to our Torments, and maketh us in our misery more exceeding miserable.

Now the Lord give every one of us his Peace, his Joy; which that we may all have, The peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the love and knowledge of Iesus Christ: And the Blood of Christ wash and purge our consciences from dead works, that we may serve the living God, Which that we may also do, The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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